DEMAND X—Land Revenue and Taxes on Income.

Mr. G. Narayanan Tampi: Sir, I beg to move for the grant of Rs. 13,89,617 under Demand X—Land Revenue and Taxes on Income.

Mr. T. W. U. Park: It has been said that it is no more possible to tax and to please than it is to love and be wise. With this view I am in complete accord, both ways. But notwithstanding that, I have very great pleasure in supporting the Demand. I should not have risen on this occasion but for one point which emerged during the general discussion, when the Chief Secretary was good enough to give us some advance information as to the incidence of the Agricultural Income tax. I think that the information was given in order to allay the apprehensions of one honourable member, but he succeeded in arousing the apprehensions of another, myself, when he disclosed that the total tax collected was in the neighbourhood of Rs. 15 lakhs of which about Rs. 14 lakhs were contributed by roughly 40 estates or companies leavingia balance of approximately only Re.1 lakh collected from about 400 odd individual assessees. I am a little disappointed with that result and I hope that the Government will view it with equal dissatisfaction.

President: Largely it was a compound of two factors. Firstly, the readiness with which many of the estates gave the information that was asked for. Secondly, the difficulty of organising the new Department which had to enquire into what may be called agricultural returns. The honourable member might have already seen from the answers to the questions put on the floor of this House that it is no easy matter to switch over from the methods of land revenue assessment and taxation to the new methods. The process would take some time but the honourable member may be sure that people who have escaped have not escaped excepting temporarily.

Mr. T. W. U. Park: I am very glad to have that assurance, Sir. I thought it might be just worth while as a taxpayer to mention the disparity.

Mr. M. K. Mackar Pillai (*Nominated*): സർ, അല്പ സ്ഥാനയെ ഞാൻ അനുകൂലിക്കുന്നു. അതോടുകൂടി ഒരു പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ട കാര്യത്തെ ഗവണ്മെൻറിന്റെ ദൃഷ്ടിയിൽ കൊണ്ടുവരണമെന്നു വിചാരിക്കുന്നു. ഇവിടെ ഒരു സെൻറ് ഭൂമിപോലും അക്കം പതിച്ചുകൊടുക്കാനില്ലെന്നും പൊതുജനങ്ങൾക്കോ ഗവണ്മെൻറിനോ ദോഷമില്ലാതെ അതുടനെയെങ്കിലും പുതുയിടത്തിൽ രണ്ടോ നാലോ സെൻറ് ഭൂമി പുറം

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പോക്കായി കിടപ്പുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ അതു കർശനമായി ഒഴിപ്പിക്കുമെന്നും ഇവിടെ പ്രസ്താവന ഉണ്ടായിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഇതിൽ അന്തർഭവിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന ഗവണ്മെൻറിന്റെ സദുദ്ദേശത്തെ എനിക്കു മനസിലാക്കാൻ കഴിയും. ഗവണ്മെൻറാവശ്യത്തിനു വേണ്ടി ജനങ്ങളുടെ ഭൂമി പൊന്നുംവിലകൊടുത്തുഏടുക്കുന്നതു ജനങ്ങളുടെ ആവശ്യംതന്നെയാണ്. അതിൽ ആക്ഷേപവുമില്ല, സങ്കടവുമില്ല. വലിയ സമ്പന്നന്മാരായ പതിനായിരം ഏക്കര കണക്കിനു ഭൂമിയുള്ള ചില വിദേശികൾക്കു ഗവണ്മെൻറിന്റെ സഹായം കൊണ്ടു ഭൂമി എടുത്തുകൊടുക്കാൻ പോകുന്നതായിട്ടു അറിയുന്നു.

Rajyasevapravina G. Parameswaran Pillai : May I know from the honourable member where the proposal is made. There is no such proposal.

Mr. M. K. Mackar Pillai : അതുവായിൽ ഒരു സ്പിന്നിംഗ്മില്ലു സ്ഥാപിക്കാൻ

President : A question was put elsewhere and I believe it was again put here asking the Government whether the Government had any idea of acquiring lands for a textile mill to be started in Alwaye by a particular gentleman. The Government replied that they had no such intention. If anybody buys lands there, it is his look out.

Mr. M. K Mackar Pillai : സർ, അവിടെ മുപ്പതേക്കർ സ്ഥലത്തോളം വാങ്ങിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഇനിയും മാക്സിമം വാല്യൂ കൊടുക്കുകയാണെങ്കിൽ ധാരാളം സ്ഥലം കിട്ടുവാനും ഉണ്ട്. എടുത്തസ്ഥലത്തു ഫാക്ടറിസ്ഥാപിക്കാനുള്ള പ്രവർത്തനം തുടങ്ങിയതായിഅറിയാം. അവിടെ അതിൽ കൂടുതലായി സ്ഥലം എടുക്കേണ്ട ആവശ്യമില്ലെന്നാണ് ഞാൻ പറയുന്നതു്.

President: The Government have absolutely no intention of acquiring lands for such purposes. For people who are going to start a new commercial enterprise for their own profit without any advertence to Government, the Government would not acquire lands. Moreover, the honourable member will realise that this Government have laid down as their policy that they are not going to encourage weaving mills as such but only spinning mills where yarn may be produced for the encouragement of cottage industries. If, on account of the present state of the market and the high prices of textiles, any commercial gentleman wishes to start a weaving mill here, he will have to buy land at the ordinary price under ordinary terms from other people who are landowners.

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Mr. M. K. Mackar Pillai: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. V. N. Padmanabha Pillai: Having failed to catch the attention of the Chair with regard to the discussion regarding the food problem under Demands IV and VI, I believe that that question may be relevant under this head.

President: It all depends. If it is a question of what may be called the control measures, legislation or executive action taken by Government in implementing the food ordinances and provisions, it comes under General Administration. In so far as it has an impact upon land revenue or the administration of the officials of the Land Revenue Department, has the honourable member to say anything?

Mr. V. N. Padmanabha Pillai: Yes, Sir. The food problem has been stated to be the most trying problem for the administration as it was put by the Financial Secretary. I do not think there is any subject which should engross the attention of the Government more obsorbingly than the present food problem. That the Government are doing everything that is humanly possible for the importation of food so as to give maximum relief to the country can never be doubted. It is also to be admitted that had it not been for the ceaseless and persistent efforts of this Government Travancore would probably have been the scene of worse distress than some of the worst-affected parts of British India. Therefore, great credit is due to the Government on this account. But, Sir, I am not sure whether I can say as much with regard to the exertions of the Government in the matter of internal production. I am not sure, whether the measures adopted by the Gonernment towards implementing the Grow More Food Campaign have resulted in maximum production or even whether the Government are putting forth their best effort in the matter. I understand that long before the food scarcity arose, long before Burma fell into the hands of the enemy and even before hostilities broke out in Europe the Economic Development Board had passed resolutions urging on Government the necessity for adopting measures to increase the output of paddy in the State so as to make Travancore self-sufficient. I also understand that resolutions had been repeatedly passed by the Legislative House to the same effect. But judging by the results, what we see is that the situation is quite disheartening. If we are to go by the figures contained in official publications, what is seen is that before the war, Travancore was producing not less than two-thirds of the paddy that was required for domestic consumption. But the position now is that we are producing only a third of the total requirements of the State, this total being calculated at

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[Mr. V. N. Padmanabha Pillai]

the minimum rate possible. The situation thus arising is one which is most serious if not alarming. If the fall in the ratio is to proceed at this rate, we do not know where matters are going to end and where we shall be a few years hence. This fall in the ratio cannot be explained away as being due to the increase in population because if we take the census figures, the increase in the population could not have been more than ten per cent at the most. Yet, the fall in production has been more than one half.

Now that State-wide rationing is in operation, if the system is efficiently and honestly worked, there should be no citizen in the State who does not get enough food for the sustenance of his life. No doubt, the times we are going through are extraordinary, but extraordinary times and extraordinary situations ought to be met by extraordinary measures. The adoption of such measures in the present case, that is, to combat the present crisis, might entail an enormous outlay of money. But howsoever large or enormous the outlay of money on this account may be, it can never be excessive. The objective of every Government being the general welfare of the people, I do not think there is any item of public expenditure whose call is more urgent or which is entitled to a higher priority than this one, namely, the solution of the food problem. My respectful suggestion, therefore, is that the Government should see their way to use as much of the surplus funds as possible for the improvement of agriculture in the State. Even if we run into deficits, it does not matter. Travancore has known deficit budgets and every civilized Government has known its deficit budgets. These Governments have not gone to rack and ruin on that account.

Next as regards the scope for spending money for the improvement of production in the State, my suggestion is that irrigation is one of the first steps to be taken by the Government.

That there is immense scope for opening original irrigation works cannot be denied. If original irrigation works are taken up production of paddy in the State will be considerably increased. Honourable members representing particular constituencies have invited Government's attention to the needs of those constituencies. As regards local needs, the first step that ought to be taken is a State-wide investigation regarding the scope of opening new irrigational works. The opening of channels from our big rivers will, besides affording water facilities, help to solve the question of manure by the deposit of silts in areas where they are needed.

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Now, when we are at our wits ends with regard to the procuring of manure, we do not realise that large volumes are annually being washed into the sea and are being deposited in foreign States. A great deal of the present worth and richness of the State of Cochin is due to Travancore manure. The opening of channels from our big rivers will considerably arrest this terrible annual wastage. That will also help considerably to reduce the havoc that is now being done by the floods. The difficulty at present is that during flood times some areas get too much water so that cultivation is being destroyed. Now, a reading of the budgetary figures will show that very much is not provided for the opening of new irrigational works and even with regard to the existing ones it may be seen that in the matter of improvements and repairs the progress made is very slow. It is gratifying to see that the Government have a programme for the opening of a few major irrigation works. It appears that those major irrigation works will be taken up only during the post-war period. My respectful suggestion is that the earlier they are taken up the better. In fact, they ought to have been taken up long ago so that we might get over the difficult food situation. Then again, another way of enhancing paddy production is to throw open lands which are in the possession of the Sircar for cultivation. There are the forest lands and other waste lands in the possession of the Sircar. With regard to forest lands the objection raised by the Government is that they are required for industrial purposes, and that therefore disafforestation cannot be allowed. With the greatest respect it has to be said that the soundness of the policy underlying that objection is open to doubt.

President: Honourable member has two minutes more.

Mr. V. N. Padmanabha Pillai: By the retention of these forests for the purpose of industry, of course, we shall be able to become rich. But becoming rich is a need which is only secondary to the present need of keeping the wolf out of the door.

President: Honourable members will realise that however stringent the need at the present moment might be, there is going to arrive a period within the next two or three years when the price of rice will fall very low. As a matter of fact, Burma, Malaya and Siam in the course of their rehabilitation will probably sell rice at a very competitive rate. At the moment we are completely at sea; we do not get enough rice, but the moment Burma and Malaya are reconquered they will begin repairing the damage that has been brought about by the war by the only way, of exporting their main products, like timber and rice. One of the problems which you will have to keep in mind, in fact India has to keep in mind—is that after having encouraged rice cultivation we are at a loss to know what we are going to do immediately after the war. That is

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[President.]

a thing to be considered. In the course of the next two years, it might well happen that many of the lands newly brought under cultivation will go out of cultivation because rice will come to be sold at a very cheap rate. So, will it be worth spending any money and disafforesting the forests on such a ruinous cultivation? It is an aspect which the honourable member will have to bear in mind.

Mr. V. N. Padmanabha Pillai: Sir, I quite appreciate the situation. So far as all other industries are concerned it is true that only those concerns which will be commercially successful ought to be undertaken. But so far as the staple food of the country is concerned my respectful suggestion is that it is undoubtedly a different policy that ought to be pursued.

President: Quite true.

Mr. V. N. Padmanabha Pillai: Sir, we find that at the time of regeneration of Germany, after the Nazis came into power in 1933, one of the first steps taken by the German Fuehrer was to get portions of the North Sea reclaimed so that food could be assured to the people. It was a time when food products could be got cheaply. The policy that ought to guide the Government in preparing a programme for the supply of food-stuffs from within the State ought to be different from the policy relating to industries. Here, it is commercial success that ought to guide them. It is because our predecessors were guided by this consideration that we have come to the present distress. Let us therefore see that we have enough fields for the supply of food in times of distress so that when food grains become cheap these fields can be used for other purposes.

President: Order, order. The honourable member has exceeded his time.

Mr. M. Govindan: Sir, I support the demand. I have got one observation to make. The policy of the Government now is definitely not to permanently assign the lands belonging to the Government. That is a commendable rule, no doubt. If the rule has not been enforced, capitalists would have monopolised all our arable lands and the poor people would have been prejudicially effected. My plea is for a small exception in the case of the land less classes, for assignment in their favour if not permanently at least on long lease. The landless people are at the mercy of the landowners and at any moment they may be asked to quit the land. It is therefore only just that the Government should come to their rescue and assign suitable lands to them on long term leases. I am not in favour of the view expressed by my friend that we may copy the Fuehrer in the matter of reclamation of the Baltic Sea.....

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President: The North Sea.

Mr. M. Govindan: Yes. My own impression is that after all, we can be governed only by commercial ideas. The fear of the repetition of such a contingency with such exceptional conditions of markets for food-stuffs is somewhat unfounded. Although we experience it today, I am sure, when the post-war reconstruction schemes come into operation it would not be possible for anyone to exploit any ther nation. That is my hope, Sir. All that we have to see is that we might go in for profitable cultivation. If we plant timber trees, for instance, it could be sold for very good prices. Our forests are suitable for many items of trees fit for industrial purposes. Let us therefore resort to that and become a rich country. When we have got Burma, though it is not for the time being with us, and other markets, why should we make Travancore self-sufficient in the matter of rice alone? What we want is money. We can then get food-stuffs from places from where we can get them. I do not know whether experts will agree with me. What common sense suggests to me is that the more profit we are able to make from our enterprises the better it will be for the country.

Mr. T. M. Chidambarathanu Pillai: Sir, I support the motion. I wish to draw the attention of the House to one point with regard to the Taluks of Thovala and Agastiswaram. Sir, from the fields which have been harvested in this part of the country, there was only a poor crop. The yield was poor for the last season and so there will be a shortage of revenue from these taluks. It is at this period that petitions for *karivu* and *tharisu* usually come in. The period which was fixed for presenting these petitions was till the 15th Chingam. My submission is that this period should be extended to 15th Kanni so that all petitions may reach the authorities within a reasonable time. It happens that there is a clash of interests between the Irrigation and Revenue Departments in settling the Karivoo or Tharisu. The Revenue Department will see that in the disposal of these petitions there will be very little opportunity for treating the fields as *tharisu* or *karivu*. The officers of the Irrigation Department should co-operate with those in the Revenue Department and satisfy the latter that they have not been able to irrigate the lands to the extent required. If they would work without this clash of interest..... .....

President: Order, order. The House will now adjourn and meet again tomorrow at 12 noon.

The House adjourned at 6 p. m.

S. VAIDYANATHA AIYAR,
Secretary to the Sri Chitra State Council.

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